

Extra help: Switch mode vs Interface mode

This section contains information to help you determine which internal switch mode your FortiGate should use, a decision that should be made before the FortiGate is installed.

What is the internal switch mode?

The internal switch mode determines how the FortiGate's physical ports are managed by the FortiGate. The two main modes are Switch mode and Interface mode.

What are Switch mode and Interface mode and why are they used?

In Switch mode, all the internal interfaces are part of the same subnet and treated as a single interface, called either **lan** or **internal** by default, depending on the FortiGate model. Switch mode is used when the network layout is basic, with most users being on the same subnet.

In Interface mode, the physical interfaces of the FortiGate unit are handled individually, with each interface having its own IP address. Interfaces can also be combined by configuring them as part of either hardware or software switches, which allow multiple interfaces to be treated as a single interface. This mode is ideal for complex networks that use different subnets to compartmentalize the network traffic.

Which mode is your FortiGate in by default?

The default mode that a FortiGate starts in varies depending on the model. To determine which mode your FortiGate unit is in, go to **System > Network > Interfaces**. Locate the **lan** or **internal** interface. If the interface is listed as a **Physical Interface** in the **Type** column, then your FortiGate is in Switch mode. If the interface is a **Hardware Switch**, then your FortiGate is in Interface mode.

How do you change the mode?

If you need to change the mode your FortiGate unit is in, first make sure that none of the physical ports that make up the **lan** or **internal** interface are referenced in the FortiGate configuration. Then go to **System > Dashboard > Status** and enter either of the following commands into the **CLI Console**:

1. Command to change the FortiGate to switch mode:

```
config system global
    set internal-switch-mode switch
end
```

2. Command to change the FortiGate to interface mode:

```
config system global
    set internal-switch-mode interface
end
```